DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 420 926 EA 029 191

AUTHOR Mannion, Patrick T.
TITLE Trusting Transformational Principals: An Empirical Surprise.
PUB DATE 1998-04-00
NOTE 29p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Diego, CA, April 1998).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Behavior; *Leadership Styles; Models; *Principals; Questionnaires; Regression (Statistics); Secondary Education; Suburban Schools; *Teacher Attitudes; *Trust (Psychology)
IDENTIFIERS *Transformational Leadership; *United States (Northeast)

ABSTRACT

This study explored the relationship between transformational leadership and trust in schools. The central thesis is that high levels of trust should significantly correlate with transformational leadership behaviors by school principals. The study involved a sample of 451 teachers in 39 public secondary schools located in four suburban areas surrounding a large northeastern city. Participants completed the Trust Scale and the Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire (X) Short Rater Form (MLQ), which empirically measure trust and transformational leadership characteristics. Study data were then analyzed by regression techniques. Results indicated a significant correlation between the Trust in Principal score on the Trust Scale and Transformational Leadership score on the MLQ. This relationship did not hold between the Trust in Colleagues score on the Trust Scale and the Transformational Leadership score on the MLQ. The relationship was also not present between the Trust in Organization score on the Trust Scale and the Transformational Leadership score on the MLQ. Apparently, the relationship existing between trusted principals who are transformational leaders and faculty does not translate into a trusting relationship among colleagues or a trusting relationship between teachers and the school organization. Contains 5 tables, and 13 references. (Author/MLH)

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ED 420 926

TRUSTING TRANSFORMATIONAL PRINCIPALS: AN EMPIRICAL SURPRISE.

BY

PATRICK T. MANNION

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY
JAMAICA, NEW YORK

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between transformational leadership and trust in schools. The central thesis of this study is that high levels of trust should significantly correlate with transformational leadership behaviors by school principals.

The research in this study involved a sample of 451 teachers in thirty-nine public secondary schools located in four suburban areas situated around a large northeastern city. Participants completed the Trust Scale and the Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (X) Short Rater Form (MLQ), which empirically measure trust and transformational leadership characteristics. The data from the study was then analyzed by regression analysis.

Results from this study indicated that there is a significant correlation between the Trust in Principal score on the Trust Scale and Transformational Leadership score on the MLQ. This relationship did not exist between the Trust in Colleagues score on the Trust Scale and the Transformational Leadership score on the MLQ. The relationship was also not present between the Trust in Organization score on the Trust Scale and the Transformational Leadership score on the MLQ.

It appears that the relationship that exists between trusted principals who are transformational leaders and faculty does not translate into a trusting relationship among colleagues or a trusting relationship between teachers and the school organization.

INTRODUCTION

This paper will deal with two topics that are of great relevance to those who offer leadership to schools in the current milieu of change and school restructuring. The first topic is a style of leadership, that can be utilized by a school principal, known as transformational leadership and the second topic is trust. It would appear that a school has a greater chance of being successful in goal achievement if both of these characteristics are present. Leithwood (1994), who believes that leadership only becomes apparent in the context of change and that the type of change dictates the type of leadership that is called for, asserts that transformational leadership and trust are positively related. Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990) state that transformational leaders may be most successful if an atmosphere of trust is present within a school. Avolio (1994) maintains that trust is essential if followers are to accept fundamental changes in the way in which an organization such as a school operates.

Much has been written about leadership. Definitions of leadership are as numerous as are the models to develop, measure, and implement

leadership in an organization. Scores of instruments have been developed to measure leadership characteristics. They answer a myriad of questions. Is leadership present? Is it successful leadership? How do you know it is successful? Are the characteristics of the successful leader transferable to other less successful leaders?

Any discussion of leadership must start with a model that present a clear operational definition of just how leadership is to be defined and how it will be measured. Attention to this detail greatly narrows down a large topic to one that can be managed and studied prudently. A good leadership model for schools is transformational leadership because it deals with the improvement of organizational performance by concentrating on higher order activities within an organization such as confidence and trust building, raising expectations and beliefs concerning the mission and vision of the organization, challenging old assumptions and stimulating new ideas, and determining individual needs and raising them to higher levels (Bass and Avolio, 1990). In addition, leadership behavior can be rated easily using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). High scores on the transformational leadership components of the MLQ indicate high levels transformational leadership

activities (Avolio, Bass, and Jung, 1995).

Trust is a topic that has not received as much attention as has leadership. Yet it should be an important part of any successful organization. An examination of trust is problematic because many models of trust tend to be very vague and inexact. Hoy and Kupersmith (1985) have developed a workable operational model for trust that allows the detection and identification of trust characteristics in an organization such as a school. The instrument involved is known as the Trust Scale and it easily measures three aspect of trust with in an organization. These aspects are Trust in Principal, Trust in Colleagues, and Trust in Organization. High levels of trust present within the different aspects of an organization are indicated by high scores on the different subtests of the Trust Scale.

Although leadership and trust are both essential to the success of educational organizations, there appears to have been little attention directed toward the measurement of the relationship that exists between the two. It would seem to be useful to investigate the empirical correlation between transformational leadership and trust. Identification of such a correlation would be of use to both new and experienced educational

leaders as well as other concerned members of the educational community.

Statement of Problem

The research problem posed by this study is: are higher levels of transformational leadership related to higher levels of trust? This research is to investigate the correlation between the transformation leadership characteristics of suburban public secondary school principals and the degree to which it influences the following three aspects of faculty trust: trust in principal, trust in colleagues, and trust in the school organization.

The construct of transformational leadership, for the purpose of this research, will be defined as a method of leadership that makes followers more cognizant of the significance and merit of task results, energize their higher-order needs, and influence followers to surmount self interest for the sake of the organization (Bass, 1985). The presence of the characteristics of transformational leadership will be reflected by high scores on the transformational leadership factors of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Avolio, Bass, and Jung, 1995).

The construct of trust, for the purpose of this research, will be defined as " the generalized expectancy held by the work group that the word, promise, written or oral statement of another individual, group, or organization can be relied upon"(Hoy and Kupersmith,1985, p.2). The presence of high trust levels in a school will be indicated by high scores on the Trust Scale (Hoy and Kupersmith,1985).

It is hypothesized that high levels of transformational leadership, as measured by high value scores on the appropriate subtest of the MLQ will positively correlate with high trust levels as measured by high value scores on the Trust Scale. Specifically, the following hypotheses are advanced:

H_1: As transformational leadership increases, faculty trust in principal increases.

H_2: As transformational leadership increases, faculty trust in colleagues increases.

H_3: As transformational leadership increases, faculty trust in organization increases.

H_4: High faculty trust scores will predict high transformational leadership scores.

A sample of thirty-nine public, secondary schools located in the suburban area of a large northeastern city will take part in the study. The Multi Leadership Questionnaire and the Faculty Trust Inventory will be used to measure the validity of the stated hypotheses. The school will be the unit of analysis. Multiple regression analysis will be carried out to test the hypotheses.

The results of this study, although influenced by a limited sample size, geographical considerations, and the fact that the sample is composed only of secondary schools , does provide insight into how a school principal whose school is involved in changes, such as restructuring, can proceed toward successful results.

METHODOLOGY

Instrumentation

Trust characteristics are measured in this study using the Trust Scale (Hoy and Kupersmith, 1985). The Trust Scale consists of twenty-one Likert-type items with responses ranging along a six point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The instrument is divided into three scales of seven items each. Each scale measures one of the following trust elements: trust in principal, trust in colleagues, and trust in the organization. Alpha coefficients of reliability for each scale are high: .97, .97, and .90 for the respective scales. These reliabilities were generally high, falling within standard parameters for internal consistency suggested in the literature (Gay, 1987) .

Leadership Characteristics were measured using the Multi factor Leadership Questionnaire (X) Short Rater Form (MLQ). Sixteen questions of the instrument measure observable characteristics of transformational leadership such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual motivation, and individual consideration. The remaining twenty-nine questions of the MLQ measure characteristics of

transactional leadership and nonleadership. Participants respond to Likert-type items with responses ranging along a five-point scale for "not at all" to "frequently or always". The results give a value score for each of twelve leadership characteristics including those for transformational leadership. Bass, Avolio, and Jung (1995) report alpha coefficients of reliability for each leadership factor scale in a range from .74 to .94, which include: Idealized influence : .86, inspirational motivation: .91, intellectual stimulation: .90, and individual consideration: .90. All of the scales' reliabilities were generally high, falling within standard parameters for internal consistency suggested in the literature (Gay, 1987).Bass, Avolio, and Jung (1995) indicate that a transformational leadership score can be calculated from the mean of the four transformatinal leadership subtests.

Sample

The sample for this study consists of thirty-nine public secondary schools. A public school, for the purpose of this study, is one that is supported by tax revenue from the sponsoring community. Geographically, the schools are all suburban in nature and located in four distinct areas located in two states around a major northeastern city. Socio-economic information for each school involved was collected from

the appropriate state-wide government agency. The student enrollment ranged from 132 to 2533, with a mean of 669.4. The expenditure per student ranged from 9391 dollars to 14, 527 dollars, with a mean of 11,591 dollars.

All participants were clearly made aware of the voluntary nature of their participation in the study. All responses would be anonymous and used in aggregate They were given the opportunity decline participation in the study before it began as well as the option of withdrawing from the study at any time. Of the 451 participants in the study, 214 (47.45%) were male, 228 (50.5%) were female and 9 (1.9%) did not respond to this item. The mean amount of experience in education is reported as 17.9 years (440 responses, 97.56%) Credentials are reported as follows: bachelor's degree: 73 (16.18%), master's degree: 348 (77.16%), double master's degree or advanced certification: 15 (3.32%), doctorate: 13 (2.88%), and 2 (0.44%) did not respond to this item.

Data Collection

School districts with secondary schools that were identified as perspective participants in the study were contacted by letter at the superintendent level. Telephone inquires were initiated one week to ten

days afterward to assure receipt of the letter. School district contact personnel were sent copies of the instruments for examination and comment. Of the roughly one hundred school districts contacted, thirty-nine successfully participated in the study. One school district contained four secondary schools that participated, and two other school district contained two secondary schools which both participated. In total forty-four secondary schools took part, with an average of 10.25 usable participants from each school. Participation was limited to school faculty members and those who submitted incomplete instruments were excluded from the study.

The instruments were administered in different ways. A researcher or surrogate traveled to a faculty professional day at a candidate school. A five minute introductory and instructional presentation was given in advance of the random distribution of the instruments. Participants returned the instruments after a time that usually did not exceed more than ten minutes.

In some cases the researchers were not allowed to meet with the faculty as a whole. In such cases, contact personnel at the participating schools were supplied with enough copies of the instruments for each

member of the faculty. An explanatory letter for the participating faculty member was included with each set of instruments. The contact person then placed the instrument packet in the mailbox of participating faculty with a return envelope to assure confidentiality. In some instances, the instruments were distributed by the contact personnel at a faculty meeting. Participants returned the instruments to the contact personnel who in turn returned them to the researcher. In one school, participants took it upon themselves to mail the instruments back to the researchers directly therein avoiding the contact personnel.

Data Analysis

This study measures the constructs of trust and leadership as characteristics of an organization. As a consequence, this study uses the school as the unit of analysis. Sirotnik (1980) endorses this approach to the study of organizational attributes as do Miskel, Fevurly, and Stewart (1979). Accordingly, the mean of each variable was computed across individuals within each school. Bivariate correlations and a linear regression were calculated between the aggregate means of the three trust scales and the total aggregate mean for the transformational leadership score. Cook and Campbell (1979) stipulate that using

aggregated groups in studies such as this one, instead of individuals, is one way to control for unreliability of measures since a "group mean will be more stable than an individual scores" (p. 43).

FINDINGS

The means, standard deviation, and variances for the variables involved in this study are reported in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Variance of the Sample Variables.

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
Transformational Leadership	2.6877	.6155	.3789
Trust in Principal	4.3871	.8293	.6877
Trust in Colleagues	4.5749	.7349	.5400
Trust In Organization	3.0239	.6333	.4011

The alpha reliability coefficients for the instruments obtained from the analysis of the data used in this study are as follows: (See Table 2.)

The twelve subtests of the Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire produced reliabilities of .6916 for idealized Influence, .9326 for inspirational motivation, .8970 for intellectual stimulation, .6780 for individual consideration, .9240 for attributed charisma, .7833 for

contingency rewards, .3873 for management by exception (active), .8030 for management by exception (passive), .9385 for extra effort, .8789 for effectiveness, .9181 for satisfaction, and .8258 for laissez-faire. The values obtained for the four transformational leadership characteristics are functional and robust (Gay, 1987). The three subtests of the Trust Scale produced reliabilities of .9247 for trust in colleagues, .7786 for trust in organization, and .8911 for trust in principal (see Table 3). These values are also serviceable for this study (Gay 1986).

The results of linear regression of the three Trust Scale predictors and the dependent Transformational Leadership variable obtained from the analysis of the data utilized in this study produced correlation as follows (see Table 4): Trust in Principal demonstrated a significant correlation with Transformational Leadership ($r = .527$, $p<.01$, 2 tailed significance = .001), however Transformational Leadership did not significantly correlate with trust in colleagues ($r= .099$, ns), or trust in organization ($r= .289$, ns). A beta weight of .659 (significance = .002) for Trust in Principal was reported along with -.057 (significance = .772) for Trust in Organization, and -.194 (significance = .259) for Trust in Colleagues. A multiple R between Transformational Leadership and the

three Trust Scale predictors was computed to be .593. The R squared value was computed to be .352. Accordingly, Trust in Principal appears to be the best predictor of Transformational Leadership while the three Trust Scales collectively accounted for approximately 35 percent of the variance in the Transformatinal Leadership variable (see Table 5).

Table 2. Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire item reliabilities.

SUBTEST TITLE	RELIABILITIES
Idealized Influence	.6919
Inspirational Motivation	.9326
Intellectual Stimulation	.8970
Individual Consideration	.6780
Attributed Charisma	.9240
Contingency Rewards	.7833
Management by Exception (A)	.3873
Management by Exception(P)	.8030
Extra Effort	.9385
Effectiveness	.8789
Satisfaction	.9181
Laissez-faire	.8258

All of the statistical calculations used in this study were carried out using

Table 3. Trust Scale RELIABILITIES.

TRUST SCALE	RELIABILITIES
Trust in Principal	.8911
Trust in Colleagues	.9247
Trust in Organization	.7786

Table 4. Linear regression correlations between Trust Scale scores and Transformational Leadership scores.

	Transformational Leadership	Trust in Principal	Trust in Colleagues	Trust in Organization
Transformational Leadership	**.9006**	.527** (.001)	.099 (.560)	.289 (.083)
Trust in Principal	.527** (.001)	**.8911**	.491** (.002)	.665** (.002)
Trust in Colleagues	.099 (.560)	.491** (.002)	**.9247**	.475** (.003)
Trust in Organization	.289 (.083)	.665** (.002)	.475** (.002)	**.7786**

** correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.
2-tailed significance in parenthesis.
Standardized item alpha reliabilities are reported on the diagonal.

Table # 5. Sets of Beta Weights and Multiple Regression Correlation.

		Predictors	Beta	Weights
Criterion Variable	Multiple Correlation	Trust in Principal	Trust in Colleagues	Trust in Organization
Transformational Leadership	.558 R^2 = .311	.659 (*.484*,.002)	-.194 (*-.164*,.259)	-.292 (*-.056*,.772)

B values in italics, significance values in bold.

Statistic Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 7.0 for windows on a Windows/Pentium platform.

INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

Interpretation of the Data

The data collected and analyzed proved instrumental in addressing the hypotheses posed in this study. In regard to the first hypothesis:

H_1: As transformational leadership increases, faculty trust in principal increases.

The hypothesis appears to be supported by the linear regression correlation value of .527 ($p < 0.01$) and a linear regression beta weight of .695 ($p < 0.01$) calculated from the database. The data supports the hypothesis that increased transformational leadership activity will increase levels of faculty trust in principal.

With regard to the second hypothesis:

H_2: As transformational leadership increases, faculty trust in colleagues increases.

The hypothesis appears to not be supported by the linear regression correlation value of .099 (ns) and a linear regression beta weight of -.194 (ns) calculated from the database. The data does not support the hypothesis that increased transformational leadership activity will

increase levels of faculty trust in colleagues.

With regard to the third hypothesis:

H_3: As transformational leadership increases, faculty trust in organization increases.

The hypothesis appears to not be supported by the linear regression correlation value of .289 (ns) and a linear regression beta weight of -.292 (ns) calculated from the database. The data does not support the hypothesis that increased transformational leadership activity will increase levels of faculty trust in organization.

With regard to the fourth hypothesis:

H_4: High faculty trust scores will predict high transformational leadership scores.

The hypothesis appears to be supported by the coefficient of multiple regression between the three Trust Scale variables and the dependent Transformational Leadership variable of .558 which accounted for approximately 31.1 percent of the variance in the dependent Transformational Leadership variable. The data supports the hypothesis that high transformational leadership scores will be predicted by high trust scale score.

Discussion

The results of this study support the insight of Bass and Avolio (1990) when they comment that " Transformational leaders have followers who place trust in them to overcome any obstacle" (p. 15). The results also support the assertion of Bennis and Nanus (1985) that Transformational Leaders direct the energies of the organizational members toward a common vision which is rooted in the trust that the organization members place not only in the observed skill of the leader but also on the leader's consistency in word and action. The transformational leader, as a individual and role model, plays an enormous role in building and supporting trust within an organization. Principals who have been identified with characteristics of transformational leaders appear to have followers who genuinely have trust in them. The faculty members of the schools examined are generally not suspicious of the actions of their principal. They feel that the integrity of the principal is high and that there would never be any unfair advantage taken of the faculty in the school. The motives of the principal are seldom challenged and that the principal is believed to always have the best interests of their faculty foremost on their agenda.

These principals articulate a compelling view of the future. They speak it enthusiastically and about the work that needs to be accomplished in order for their vision to be realized. This process may involve problem solving and adjustment. Problem solving within these schools involves principals who encourages their faculty to look at quandaries from many different angles while re-examining suitability of critical assumptions within the school. Differing perspectives are encouraged and given significant attention within the process. The leader, when appropriate, offers suggestions for new ways of solving problems and getting the work of the school accomplished. There is an overpowering confidence expressed that problems can be solved and goals can be achieved.

It seems that this trust relationship is restricted to the principal and does not extend to the organization and colleagues. Simple put, teachers in a school may trust their principal but not necessarily trust colleagues or the school organization. The type of trust present in the sample seems to exemplify either calculus based trust or knowledge based trust (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996). The trust level between the school organization and the faculty as well as among the faculty appears to be of the lowest variety.

This calculus based trust relies heavily on a reward and threat of punishment mode of operation and it incorporates the proposal that trusting individuals are always considering the cost of violating a trust versus the benefit from staying in the trusting relationship. Transformational leaders who direct their activities on a transactional level could possible advance the faculty trust level and produce Howell and Avolio's (1993) "educated organization" which would advance to a higher level of trust. The individual characteristics of the transformational principal seem to be instrumental in the trust that faculty places in the principal. This is a not an unexpected observation. The trust relationship between the transformational principal and the faculty appears to be a knowledge based trust. Knowledge gained through regular communication and relationship development is constantly utilized to test the strength of the trusting relationship. The faculty and the principal become more accepting of each others behaviors because they know every one involved well and that in the long run the relationship will be of value to them. The transformational principal is involved in changing the trust level in the school to a higher level. Principals who are transformational should eventually advance trust in the organization to

Identification-based trust which can emerge from knowledge-based trust. The trusting behavior advances beyond empathy between the participants to the point where the participants know what is of true consequence to each other. This type of trust is strengthened by development of a joint identity and commitment to commonly shared values. Identification-based trust is the result of a tremendous amount of close interaction that usually requires a great investment of time and energy on the part of the trusting parties. Their is an increased awareness level of the faculty about the importance and the worth of the designated outcomes and the ways of achieving them. The faculty should be motivated to transcend their own immediate self-interests and work cooperatively for the sake of the mission and vision of the school(Bass & Avolio, 1990) . The results of the study indicate that this is not the case at the present time in the sample. In theory, with time the transformational principal should be the recipient of advanced levels of trust among the faculty and between the faculty and the school organization. Principal transformational leadership, that developed based on faculty trust in the principal, will optimistically change the level of trust in the overall organization.

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